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CENTRAL FAX CENTER****MAR 17 2008****Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 - 28 (Previously Cancelled)

29. (Currently Amended) A mortarboard configured for operative use by masons and brick layers at a construction site, comprising;

a. a generally rectangular sheet material having an outermost thickness of at least about 0.5 inches and defining a broad continuous upper working surface, wherein said upper working surface is slightly contoured in continuous dished-out manner from each of the sides of said upper working surface across substantially the extent of said upper working surface, the radius of said contour being equal in all directions from a central position on the working surface and toward each of said sides;

b. said upper working surface being sized and configured to retainably hold an operative quantity of cementitious mortar to be worked by an operator such as by mixing with a trowel or shovel, and being impervious to retain moisture in the mortar;

c. said sheet of material defining a cut-out handle portion formed entirely through said sheet material adjacent one edge of said material and sized to accept an adult person's hand or fork-lift tine to facilitate carrying of said mortarboard in a generally vertical manner when not in operative use; and

d. wherein mixing of mortar on said working surface by scraping a trowel over said contoured surface is facilitated.

30. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 29, wherein said impervious upper working surface comprises polymer material.

31. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 29, wherein said sheet material comprises polymer material.

32. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 29, wherein said outermost thickness of said sheet material is between about 0.5 to 1 inch.

33. (Currently Amended) The mortarboard of claim 29, wherein the ~~board-like~~ sheet [[of]] material has a width dimension measured between first and second opposed edges and a height dimension measured between third and fourth opposed edges, wherein said width and height dimensions are greater or equal to about 24 inches.

34. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 29, wherein said cut-out handle portion has a width of greater or equal to about 6 inches.

35. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 29, wherein the weight of the mortarboard is about 5 pounds.

36. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 29, further including a plurality of support ribs integrally formed with said sheet material, configured and arranged to provide structural support for said upper working surface.

37. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 29, further including raised peripheral lip portions along at least three sides of said upper working surface.

38. (Previously Presented) The mortarboard of claim 37, wherein said raised peripheral lip portions extend less than about 0.375 inches above the upper working surface.

39. (Previously Cancelled)

40. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 29, wherein the radius of curvature of the dished-out contour of said working surface is larger than the largest width or height dimension of said working surface.

41. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 29, wherein a lowermost portion of the dished-out upper working surface is recessed less than about 0.5 inches from an uppermost portion of the upper working surface.

42. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 29, wherein the material is configured so that a front and rear surface of the material will nest together with other mortarboards of like construction, when more than one mortarboards are stacked together.

43. (Currently Amended) The mortarboard of claim 29, wherein said sheet material is of a strength to resist breaking or damage to said working surface when struck by construction tools ~~such as hammers~~.

44. (Currently amended) A strong, lightweight mortarboard configured for operable use by masons and brick layers at a construction site, comprising:

a. a board-like sheet material having an outermost thickness of at least about 0.5 inches and defining a continuous smooth solid broad upper working surface extending generally across the entire width of said sheet material between opposed side edges thereof; said sheet material being configured so that a front and a rear surface of the material will nest together with other mortarboards of like construction when more than one mortarboards are stacked together;

b. said upper working surface being sized and configured to retainably hold an operative quantity of cementitious mortar to be worked by an operator, ~~such as by mixing with a trowel or shovel~~, and being impervious to retain moisture in the mortar; ~~[[and]]~~

c. said sheet material being slightly contoured across said upper working surface in dished-out manner in a single continuous arc extending from each of the sides of said upper working surface to form a single continuous arcuate contour across the working surface; and

d. whereby an operator can work mortar on said mortarboard by moving a trowel or shovel in a sweeping motion without engaging any irregularities across the mortarboard that would interfere with continuous movement of said ~~the~~ shovel or trowel during the mortar working operation, and wherein mixing of mortar on said surface by scraping a trowel over said contained surface is facilitated.

45. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 44, wherein said upper working surface comprising polymer material.

46. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 44, wherein said sheet material comprises polymer material.

47. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 44, wherein said outermost thickness of said sheet material is between about 0.5 to 1 inch.

48. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 44, further including a carrying handle for carrying the mortarboard in generally vertical manner when not in operative use.

49. (Currently Amended) A strong, lightweight mortarboard configured for operable use by masons and brick layers at a construction site, comprising:

a. a board-like sheet material having an outermost thickness of at least about 0.5 inches and defining a continuous smooth solid broad upper working surface extending generally across the entire width of said sheet material between opposed side edges thereof;

b. said upper working surface being sized and configured to retainably hold an operative quantity of cementitious mortar to be worked by an operator, and being impervious to retain moisture in the mortar;

c. said sheet material being slightly contoured across said upper working surface in dished-out manner in a single continuous arc extending from each of the sides of said upper working surface to form a single continuous arcuate contour across the working surface;

d. said sheet material including a carrying handle for carrying the mortarboard in generally vertical manner when not in operative use. The mortarboard of claim 48, wherein said carrying handle comprises comprising a cut-out portion defined by said sheet material extending entirely through said sheet material[[.]]; and

[[d]] e. whereby an operator can work mortar on said mortarboard by moving a trowel or shovel in a sweeping motion without engaging any irregularities across the mortarboard that would interfere with continuous movement of the shovel or trowel during the mortar working operation, and wherein mixing of mortar on said surface by scraping a trowel over said contoured surface is facilitated.

50. (Currently Amended) The mortarboard of claim 48, A strong, lightweight mortarboard configured for operable use by masons and brick layers at a construction site, comprising:

a. a board-like sheet material having an outermost thickness of at least about 0.5 inches and defining a continuous smooth solid broad upper working surface extending generally across the entire width of said sheet material between opposed side edges thereof;

b. said upper working surface being sized and configured to retainably hold an operative quantity of cementitious mortar to be worked by an operator, and being impervious to retain moisture in the mortar;

c. said sheet material being slightly contoured across said upper working surface in dished-out manner in a single continuous arc extending from each of the sides of said upper working surface to form a single continuous arcuate contour across the working surface;

d. a carrying handle configured to carry the mortarboard in generally vertical manner when not in operative use, wherein said carrying handle defines an aperture sized and configured to operatively accept a person's hand or a tine of a fork-lift therethrough; and

[[d]] e. whereby an operator can work mortar on said mortarboard by moving a trowel or shovel in a sweeping motion without engaging any irregularities across the mortarboard that would interfere with continuous movement of the shovel or trowel during the mortar working operation, and wherein mixing of mortar on said surface by scraping a trowel over said contoured surface is facilitated.

51. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 44, further including a plurality of support ribs integrally formed with said sheet material, configured and arranged to provide support for said upper working surface in a manner so as to not interfere with the smooth continuous nature of said working surface.

52. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 44, wherein a lowermost portion of said dished-out working surface is recessed less than about 0.5 inches from an uppermost portion of the working surface.

53. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 52, wherein a lowermost portion of said dished-out working surface is recessed less than about 0.375 inches from an uppermost portion of the working surface.

54. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 53, wherein a lowermost portion of said dish-shaped working surface is recessed less than about 0.25 inches from an uppermost portion of the working surface.

55. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 44, wherein the contour of said upper working surface has a single radius of curvature about a point located generally above a central portion of the working surface.

56. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 55, wherein the radius of curvature is larger than the largest width or diameter dimension of said working surface.

57. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 44, wherein the upper working surface has a width dimension greater or equal to about 24 inches.

58. (Previously presented) The mortarboard of claim 44, wherein the mortarboard further defines a bottom surface opposite of said working surface, arranged and configured to operatively accommodate a support stand for the mortarboard.

59. (Cancelled)

60. (Currently Amended) The mortarboard of claim 44, wherein said sheet material is of a strength to resist breaking or damage to said working surface when struck by construction tools such as hammers.

Claims 61-64 (Previously Cancelled)